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OUR OLD WORLD LETTER

A French Air Regiment--At Odds Over An Eclipse--Improving Trade of The Soudan

PARIS, January 6.—In a few days France will possess the first aerial regiment called into existence by any country. By a decree of Minister of War Mersin the scattered aviators in the service of the French army are at length to be concentrated into a single organized body, and the public is congratulating itself upon this addition of a fourth arm to the national defenses.

It was admitted on all hands that the formation of a regiment of aeroplanists had been made not only probable, but desirable, by the great progress achieved during the last two years, especially in view of the brilliant results shown during the army maneuvers last summer, when such splendid work was done by units of six aeroplanes, each unit having its movable workshop, stock of spare parts, automobiles, etc.

But to maintain such a regiment properly grants hitherto made by Parliament for military aviation will, it is declared, be quite inadequate, and a credit of \$10,000,000 is about to be asked for in the chamber. This sum, although considerable, is thought to be none too much. In the first place, it is considered by experts that the army at present possesses less than a fourth of the number of aeroplanes necessary to form a really efficient defensive and offensive force, and it is intended, if the sum to be asked for is obtained, to provide a thousand new ones before 1912. These will suffice to provide each army corps with six units of six machines each, as well as a small number in reserve.

The deputies who are going to urge the \$10,000,000 grant have sketched out the following budget:

1000 aeroplanes, \$4,000,000.
Twenty new aeroplanes, with necessary hangars, workshops, offices and autos, \$4,000,000.
Machine tools and upkeep for a year, \$2,000,000.

It is estimated that to keep this navy of the air at the highest point of efficiency will entail an average annual expenditure of \$4,000,000, the average life of an aeroplane being reckoned at only about a year or 18 months at the outside.

The often repeated objection that such a large grant as the one proposed should be withheld until experts can decide on an ideal model is now exploded, as it is recognized that not one, but several types will be necessary for the varied work required. At least four kinds of aeroplanes are pointed out as particularly useful: The single seat monoplane for very rapid reconnoitering in conjunction with cavalry; the two-seated biplane, slower, but surer, to hold a pilot and a specially trained and equipped observer; the three-seated machine, probably a biplane, which will practically do the work of the unsatisfactory dirigible balloon, and, finally, the still larger type to hold several persons and carry considerable weight. The last would be used for offensive tactics and would carry the projectiles, explosives and engines necessary for aerial warfare.

IN "OLD FRITZ'S" HONOR.

BERLIN, January 6.—Elaborate preparations are in progress throughout Prussia for the commemoration of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Frederick the Great on January 23 and 24.

The celebration at Berlin will begin on the evening of January 23 with a lecture at the War Academy, in the presence of the Kaiser, on "Old Fritz's" prowess as a general and strategist. On the morning of January 24 the Kaiser, attended by the commanding generals of the Prussian army, will participate in a solemn memorial service in the old garrison church at Potsdam, behind the altar of which Frederick the Great lies buried in an iron casket. It was on this casket that Napoleon Bonaparte scratched the letter "N" when he took Berlin in 1806, remarking, as he stood before the bier, "If you were alive, Frederick, I would not be here."

The rest of the day will be devoted to parades, regimental celebrations, and an address on Frederick's services to modern Germany by the Prussian historian royal, Dr. Koser, at a special meeting of the Academicians in the Royal Castle of Berlin. The day will close with a military gala opera.

Similar festivities will be held everywhere in Prussia where troops are garrisoned. Regiments which can trace their origin back to Frederickian times will hold special celebrations.

In all the public schools of the kingdom exercises glorifying the deeds of "Old Fritz" will be held.

CHEAP TOURS FOR DOCTORS.

BERLIN, January 6.—A great delegation of German doctors will go to America next summer to tour the country and attend the International Hygiene Congress at Washington in September.

The committee in charge announces "all-inclusive prices" for a six weeks' tour, embracing visits to New York, Philadelphia, Atlantic City, Baltimore, Washington, Chicago, Montreal, Boston and Albany, of from \$425 to \$625, depending on size and location of the steamship cabins.

Yet Germans hear that the cost of living is high in the United States.

THE COMING ECLIPSE.

PARIS, January 6.—Visitors to Paris next spring will witness an eclipse of the sun. At 10 minutes and a few seconds after noon on April 17 the sun's disc, according to French astronomers, will be totally blotted out by the moon. The eclipse will be visible along a narrow strip north of Paris, passing between St. Germain-en-Laye and Le Vézinet and running out to the northeast.

According to the statement of Charles Nordmann, astronomer of the Paris Observatory, a total eclipse of the sun in any particular region of the earth is visible only every 360 years, and on this occasion it will be possible to watch from Paris itself, through smoked glasses, the moon's shadow slowly stealing over the face of the sun. The phenomenon will begin at 10:45 a. m., and for two brief seconds, 10 minutes after midday, the suburbs north of Paris will be plunged into darkness resembling that of a moonlight night, while early morning twilight will prevail in the city itself. These unusual conditions will last until 1:15 p. m.

M. Nordmann anticipates that the eclipse will resolve the difference existing between French and British astronomers regarding the size of the moon's diameter. The French astronomers foretell a total eclipse and the British a so-called annular eclipse—that is to say, an eclipse in which the moon will be surrounded by a ring of light. If the theory of the French astronomers is correct, visitors to Paris will be treated to an unforgettable

spectacle. The moon's ring will be lighted by delicate pink tongues of hydrogenic emanations of the solar atmosphere, and all round the sun will be a mysterious green halo, known as the "corona," and formed of a gas unknown on earth.

COUNT LUTZOW COMING.

LONDON, January 6.—Count and Countess Lutnow, who are as well known in London society as on the Continent, will sail for America on January 20. Count Lutnow has accepted invitations to lecture in various cities and universities of America on the history of the Czechs, beginning with Boston, where the Lutnows are due on February 6. They will visit in turn Yale, Harvard, Wisconsin and Princeton, and will also go to Chicago, where the count has promised to give a lecture on Washington's birthday.

Count Lutnow is the head of a leading family of the Bohemian nobility and takes a deep interest in the condition of the Czechs as a nation. He is a bibliophile and a writer of considerable merit, having recently published a history of the Czechs.

Shortly after their marriage Countess Lutnow purchased Zampach, in Bohemia, which was formerly a monastery and has many historical associations. This she has restored and brought up to date, and she and her husband make it their home, and constantly extend hospitality to their many English friends, always, however, coming to London for the season. They take the same house, 1 Deanery street, Mayfair, which they have now rented for some years past from Lord Cloncurry.

TRADE OF SOUDAN LEAPS UP.

LONDON, January 6.—Col. Theodore Roosevelt is probably most kindly remembered in England because of his commendation of the work done by Englishmen in the Soudan. Some figures just issued show how remarkable has been the Soudan's progress.

A statement of the customs business for the nine months ending September 30 shows an extraordinary advance in both imports and exports. The imports amounted to £1,696,663, against £1,318,318 for the three quarters of 1910. The exports total £1,293,147, against £799,242 for the corresponding period of last year. Already the total trade done by the Soudan exceeds by 25 per cent the figures for the whole of last year.

Such a tale of progress is well-nigh incredible. At any rate, it gives one a rough idea of what will ensue when

the railways and irrigation work are in full swing in that country.

U. S. MAY GET BUNYAN RELIC.

LONDON, January 6.—The volume that is declared to be John Bunyan's copy of Fox's "Book of Martyrs" is soon to go to America, according to the president of the Bedford Literary Institute, unless action is taken by the government or some public-spirited individual to prevent this "loss of a national treasure."

The volume was recently offered at auction, but only a comparatively small bid, which was not accepted, was forthcoming. The book is owned by the Bedford Literary Institute.

It will be remembered that last spring the proposed sale of the copy, which was in the hands of the masters of the Bedford Literary Institute, aroused some controversy on the right of the trustees to dispose of the relic. Many persons thought that the book should remain in Bedford on account of Bunyan's close association with that town. Questions were asked in the House of Commons, and eventually the attorney general intervened to ascertain whether the trustees had the right to sell the work. He decided that the sale could not be prevented.

The result of the auction was most disappointing. In spite of the auctioneer's appeal for "a thousand," the opening bid was only £300 (\$1500). There were two or three other offers and the auctioneer said £600 (\$3000). Then there was a pause, but no further offer was forthcoming.

"It cannot go at that price," said the auctioneer, and the book remained unsold.

It is declared that the intervention by the attorney general robbed the trustees of a splendid chance of disposal.

TO EXPLORE THE DEAD SEA.

JERUSALEM, Palestine, January 6.—An expedition, the purpose of which is to thoroughly explore the Dead Sea and its environs, under the leadership of Dr. Bruhl, of the University of Berlin, has just arrived from Europe and continued to the scene of its future operations.

The motives of the expedition, so it is emphatically averred by Dr. Bruhl, are purely scientific, with absolutely no elements of commercialism entering into its ultimate object. It is financed by private subscriptions, a few members defraying their share of the expense, while among the contributors several leading Zionists figure very prominently.

The work of exploration will consist

in the major part of sounding the depth of various sections of the lake as well as analyzing the unique and complex composition of its waters, studying its shores, investigating the nature of the different minerals that are said to abound in that region, exploring, as far as is possible, the channels of the many rivers and hot water streams, apart from the Jordan, which flow into the sea from both the eastern and western mountain ranges that hem its shores, examining and classifying the varieties of fish that exist in large numbers only in the extreme southeastern section of the lake, which consists mainly of shallows and marshes.

It must be remembered in this connection that it has always been firmly maintained by those who visited the Dead Sea and wrote treatises about it long ago that no fish of any kind can make their habitat in any part of it, and this long-established belief was given the death blow only recently by a pleasure party of Americans long resident in the country who visited the southern end of the lake and discovered fish.

So it remains for the members of the German expedition to arrive at the causes which undoubtedly must be

due to varying conditions of chemical composition of the water that make it possible for fish to live in certain sections of the lake and not in others; and, in short, to find out everything about this strange body of water from scientific standpoints that is worth knowing.

In order the better to facilitate its operations the expedition has chartered a little steam vessel for the space of three months with the proviso that at the option of Dr. Bruhl the lease may be extended for an indefinite period.

CASABIANCA'S CONSOLATION.

The boy was standing upon the burning deck whence all but him had fled.

"I guess I'm done for," he said as he glanced around him, "but there's one comfort; they'll never be able to say I had cold feet!"

Whereupon he went below, gaily whistling that popular ballad:

"You needn't set up for me,
For I ain't a-comin' back."

An old bachelor will stay out till 2 a. m. if he wants to, but he misses the fun of trying to sneak upstairs with his shoes off.



LOST OUT AGAIN.
I've dreamed of you constantly ever since I met you.
Papa says I must never marry a dreamer.